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Global Challenges

Thailand To Launch Condom Campaign, Implement Legal Protection for Women Whose Partners Refuse To Use Condoms

Thai Public Health Minister Mongkol Na Songkhla recently at Thailand's 11th annual national seminar on HIV/AIDS said he is concerned about the increasing number of HIV cases in the country, especially among married couples, the [Bangkok Post](#) reports. According to the *Post*, about 40% of the 18,000 new HIV cases diagnosed annually in Thailand occur among women who contract the virus from their husbands. About 28% of new cases are among men who have sex with men and 10% are among commercial sex workers, according to the *Post*.

Mongkol said he is considering launching a "family condom" campaign and encouraging married couples to be monogamous. "Using condoms should be regarded as showing respect to each other so that both husband and wife will be safe from sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS," Mongkol said, adding that women also should "stand up for a better deal from their husbands."

The Thai National Committee on AIDS will carry out the condom-promotion program with Mechai Viravaidya, chair of the [Population and Community Development Association](#). Mechai said that as part of the program, the committee will ask hotels to put complimentary condoms in guest rooms (Apiradee, *Bangkok Post*, 7/5).

In addition, Mongkol at the seminar said that Thailand soon will provide legal protection to women whose partners refuse to wear condoms during sex, the *Thai News Service* reports. According to an agreement reached at a recent [UNAIDS](#) meeting in Geneva, laws on social issues and gender equality should be implemented as primary solutions to curb the spread of HIV, Mongkol said (*Thai News Service*, 7/5).